

In practice, the manufacturer 14 will program the timing device 12 for an appropriate period of time depending on the particular weapon system being sold and the purchaser. The weapon system will then be operable by the purchaser within that time period. If the time period elapses before the purchaser has used the weapon, and assuming there is no perceived threat to the country of origin, the whole timing device 12 could be replaced by the manufacturer or the original timing device 12 could be reprogrammed either manually or remotely as illustrated in the figure. If, however, circumstances were to change, the manufacturer could send a signal to disarm immediately the weapon system.

The cost and sophistication of the subject invention would vary with the lethality of the host weapon. For instance, the timing device for mines would be a relatively inexpensive and simple device which would be activated by arming the mine itself. Such a device could not be reset once activated and would, most likely, have only one time setting.

As stated earlier, it is contemplated that the present invention applies to any weapon system including auxiliary equipment such as communications and navigational gear and related systems.

It is believed that the invention has significant defense/foreign policy ramifications, and that our federal government might well assume control over the setting and resetting of the timing apparatuses.

It is recognized that modifications and variations of the invention disclosed herein will occur to those skilled in the art, and it is intended that all such modifications and variations be included within the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

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Weapon system comprising:  
a weapon; and  
time apparatus adapted to disarm the weapon after a selected time has elapsed.

2. The weapon system of claim 1 wherein the weapon is selected from the group consisting of bombs, missiles, aircraft, torpedoes, land mines, sea mines, munitions, and hardware related thereto.
3. The weapon system of claim 1 further including means for shortening or extending the selected time, either before or after the selected time has elapsed.
4. The weapon system according to claim 3 wherein the means for shortening or extending the selected time is remote from the weapon.